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Abbreviations

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party of Turkey)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
DSP	Demokrat-Sosyal Partisi (Democratic Left Party)
EU	European Union
IEA	International Energy Agency
IKV	Iktisadi Kalkinma Vakfi (Economic Development Foundation)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party)
MÜSIAD	Müstakil Sanayici ve Işadamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSC	National Security Council
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
PKK	Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
RP	Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)
TBB	Türkiye Barolar Birliği (Union of Turkish Bar Associations)
TESEV	Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation)
TOBB	Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği (Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey)
TÜSIAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve Işadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)

Summary

Turkey's foreign policy has been in transition since the early 1990s. This change is reflected in the country's departure from a firmly security-focused, coercive and unilateral foreign policy towards a policy keyed more to reaching diplomatic, multilateral solutions for foreign-policy problems. Significant examples might be seen in Turkey's political and economic rapprochement with Syria, Iran, and Russia, but also in a pragmatic approach to dealing with foreign-policy disputes, as illustrated by the process of change in Turkey's Armenia policy. Looked at in terms of the overall picture, it can be said that the country is increasingly intent on abandoning its self-enforced role as an "intimate stranger" and honing its political and economic profile in its neighbourhood in order to strengthen its position as a regional power.

The present paper seeks to identify some of the domestic factors responsible for the change in Turkey's regional foreign policy. It argues that the change in Turkey's regional foreign policy must be seen as part of a fundamental domestic reorientation. The domestic reorientation could be interpreted as a rearrangement of the overall domestic and social context in Turkey, which appears to have led both to a diversification of the country's centres of political power and changes in the country's institutional power relations.

1 Turkey's foreign policy in transition

Turkey's foreign policy has been in transition since the early 1990s. This change is reflected in the country's departure from a firmly security-focused, coercive and unilateral foreign policy towards a policy keyed more to reaching diplomatic, multilateral solutions for foreign-policy problems. Turkey is increasingly seeking to establish a cooperative "good-neighbour policy" (Davutoğlu 2004).

Until the end of the 1990s, relations between Turkey and its neighbouring countries were tense, and the country was regionally isolated. Turkey has since succeeded in reducing these tensions. Significant examples might be seen in Turkey's political and economic rapprochement with Syria, Iran, and Russia, but also in a pragmatic approach to dealing with foreign-policy disputes, as illustrated by the process of change in Turkey's Armenia policy. Looked at in terms of the overall picture, it can be said that the country is increasingly intent on abandoning its self-enforced role as an "intimate stranger" (Aras 2004) and honing its political and economic profile; in the Caspian region it is seeking to refrain from engaging in geopolitical rivalries and to focus more on pursuing pragmatic economic interests. This has given Turkey the potential to become an important driver of regional cooperation.

The present paper seeks to identify some of the domestic factors responsible for the change in Turkey's regional foreign policy. To name some of the central questions concerned: What endogenous factors may be cited to explain this process of change? What actors are driving this change, and what do they stand for? How stable is this process and what are the factors that shape it? To what extent does this process of change offer Turkey the opportunity to assume the role of a driver of regional cooperation?

The paper's starting thesis is that the change in Turkey's regional foreign policy must be seen as part of a fundamental domestic reorientation. The paper argues that this is a response to the process of structural change underway in the international system since the end of the East-West confrontation in 1991, with the altered incentives and constraints it has entailed for the country, and a rearrangement of the overall domestic and social context in Turkey, which appears to have led both to a diversification of the country's centres of political power and changes in the country's institutional power relations.

Ever since the paradigm shift in international relations brought about by the end of the East-West confrontation, Turkey has been engaged in a process of adapting to the new regional setting. This process has led to an increased regional activism on Ankara's part. The background must be seen in structural changes in Turkey's regional security environment that on the one hand led to an increase in security threats and on the other opened up new scopes of regional action for Turkey with regard to the Middle East and the Caspian region.

These externally motivated changes – with which the present paper cannot deal at any length – found themselves in collision with a new set of domestic dynamics. This included efforts on the part of the political opposition to the dominant military-bureaucratic camp – the latter had held key positions within the country's political system since the Republic was founded in 1923 – to reposition itself. The new actor constellations that emerged in the course of economic liberalisation gained more and more access to the political decision-making process, assuming the role of a new system of leverage used to articulate so-

cial interests. This placed the ruling military-bureaucratic establishment under increasing pressure, leading to a diversification of the foreign- and security-policy debates and priorities in Turkey. If the thinking of the chief traditional actors of Turkish foreign policy had been heavily influenced by fears of territorial threats, a number of new cooperation strategies now began to find their way. Turkey's security-focused foreign policy was gradually widened to include an economic and political-diplomatic dimension.

This process was closely bound up with the growing internalization of democratic norms in connection with Turkey's growing alignment with the European Union (EU), and in particular with the EU accession perspective held out to the country for the first time in 1999 (Oğuzlu 2004; Everts 2004). While it is true that the EU accession perspective was not itself the causal factor that sparked the process of domestic and external change in Turkey, it did function in key ways as a catalyst in the process (Tocci 2005).

In its analysis of Turkey's regional foreign policy, the present paper concentrates exclusively on the Middle East and the Caspian region. This focus has not yet been adopted in German research on Turkey. The bulk of the literature in this field deals with the benefits and drawbacks of Turkish accession to the EU or Ankara's various disputes with Cyprus and Greece, both EU member countries. This thematic focus reflects the fact that in the German-speaking countries Turkey is perceived primarily in terms of the efforts it has undertaken to acquire EU membership. However, these discussions turn a blind eye to the process of profound far-reaching in which Turkey's politics, society, and economy have been engaged over the past two decades, failing to perceive the huge impacts that this transformation process has had on the country's foreign-policy orientation – impacts, be it said, that may entail important consequences for German and European interests in this crisis-prone region.

It is above all with regard to the ongoing debates over the European Neighbourhood Policy and the role that Turkey, a so-called anchor country[1], could play in this framework. Turkey's geopolitical position as a pivotal state[2], and the positive and negative spillover effects that this entails, enable the country to wield considerable influence on regional stability. A Turkey stable in political and economic terms would have the potential to become an important factor for regional stability, while – as events in the 1990s show – a Turkey shaken by ethnic, political, and economic crisis would tend more to represent a destabilizing factor for the region as a whole.

The aim of the present study is to cast light on the domestic context of the process of change in Turkey's foreign policy. Foreign policy is generally regarded as the outcome of a number of complex optimisation processes at the national and international level (Tayfur 2005; Çalış 2001; Medick-Krakau 1999; Rosati 1994; Rosenau 1966; Farrell 1966). According to Holsti, it is possible to identify four fundamental aims of national foreign pol-

1 Anchor countries play a pre-eminent economic and political role in their own regions. This results from their close economic links with neighbouring countries, their efforts to initiate regional integration processes, or certain model functions they have in their regions. They exert substantial influence on the economic and political dynamics both in their own regions and at the international level (Stamm 2004).

2 Among the characteristic features of a pivotal state are its geographic location, the size of its population, and its economic and military development potential; these factors enable a pivotal state to influence, to one extent or another, the dynamics in its region (Chase / Hill / Kennedy 1996).

icy (Holsti 1995): pursuit of *security*, pursuit of *autonomy*, pursuit of *national prosperity*, and pursuit of *prestige*. Pursuit of security refers above all to efforts to safeguard a polity's physical existence and to protect it from internal or external threats. A threat is seen as given if there is a real risk that a given conflict may be acted out using military means. Pursuit of autonomy refers to the ability of states to engage in an independent domestic and foreign policy. In international politics dependence is inevitably risky in that there is no guarantee that the goods and services on which a state is dependent will continue to be provided in the case of conflict. The idea behind the pursuit of national prosperity is that a country's economic resources and performance constitute the basis for its security, autonomy, and prestige. At the same time, the domestic fate of a government depends heavily on the country's economic situation, a government's power to act hinging crucially on this factor. Pursuit of prestige refers to a country's reputation and status in the international community. These factors have substantial influence on the chances a country has to build amicable relations with its international environment and to seek partners for cooperation in coming to grips with common challenges.

If we ask what it is that influences a state's external behaviour, our basic thesis would be that the actions of state are determined by both external and internal needs, with state actors invariably moving at two levels – between international and social or domestic constraints (Putnam 1988). The external factors influencing state action include the international distribution of power and a country's economic dependence and integration into international bargaining systems.

However, it is rarely possible to trace foreign-policy decisions back seamlessly to international incentives and constraints. Indeed, such decisions are heavily influenced by a country's political system, the dominant type of its elites[3] and decision-makers, the dynamics inherent to competition for domestic political power (e. g. scope of parliamentary oversight, level of integration or isolation of interest groups and civil society actors, bureaucratic decision-making processes, and institutionalised power relations) (Rosenau 1966; Müller / Risse-Kappen 1990; Synder / Bruck / Sapin 1954). This renders obsolete any attempt to draw a strict analytical line between domestic and foreign policy.

Depending on the concrete issue under consideration, it is thus necessary to examine whether, in a given case, international or domestic determinants must be seen as responsible for a decision taken by a government. Accordingly, depending on the initial question under consideration, attention will focus either on change in international structures and a country's position in the international system or on the domestic reorientation of a given country. The present study focuses on the domestic context of Turkey's foreign policy and seeks to elucidate connections between the country's domestic reorientation and changes observed in its external actions.

As noted above, the paper's starting hypothesis is that impulses for a reorientation of Turkey's regional foreign policy originated in the domestic context and were driven in par-

3 What is meant here by elites are *"persons who are able by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially […] the principal decision makers in the largest or most resource-rich political, governmental, economic, military, professional, communications and cultural organizations and movements in society."* (Burton et al. cited after Warweg 2006).

ticular by the emergence of new power centres beyond the reach of the traditionally dominant elite, the latter's integration into the political system, and the resultant changes to the foreign-policy decision-making process. These changes in institutional power relations, brought about by pluralisation and democratisation of the dominant order, led the key actors to adopt a new set of preferences and strategies.

Following this line of argument, the following chapter deals with the endogenous determinants, while Chapter 3 discusses the basic characteristics of Turkey's policy towards the Middle East and the Caspian region. Chapter 2 is devoted to a presentation of the domestic reorientation in Turkey. As elements of the process of internal transformation, Chapter 2.1 depicts the altered actor constellations and power relations in Turkish society, while Chapter 2.2 looks into changes to the country's foreign-policy decision-making process. Chapter 3 outlines Turkey's regional foreign policy in the Middle East (3.1) and the Caspian region (3.2). The chapter starts out with a discussion of the efforts undertaken by Turkey to take leave of its role in the Middle East as an "intimate stranger" (Aras 2004) and to assume a new role as a driver of regional cooperation. Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran may be seen as exemplary for the change in the country's Middle East policy. Part 2 describes the ways in which Turkey's policy in the Caspian region is becoming keyed increasingly less to the dictates of geopolitics and more to a pragmatic policy rooted in concrete national interests. As examples, the section deals with Turkey's relations with Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

2 Domestic reorientation

Since the foundation of the Republic, Turkey's foreign policy has mainly been a Western-oriented policy driven by the aspiration of seeing Turkey perceived as a European state. This paradigm went hand in hand with a marked focus on national security and sovereignty. This is the reason why, during the Cold War, loyalty to its NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) partners was a firm guiding principle of Turkey's foreign and security policy (Karaosmanoğlu 1988; Kirişçi 1994). Despite historical, ethnic, religious, and cultural links, Turkey's regional neighbourhood played as good as no role whatever for the country, which saw the Middle East, with its marked oriental traditions, as backward and incompatible with a secular and nationalist Turkey (Ekşi 2000; Altunışık 2005). The situation was similar when it came to the Caspian region, which, cut off by the Iron Curtain, likewise offered few foreign-policy options during the Cold War period.

In the 1990s Turkey's regional foreign policy continued to be formulated mainly through the prism of the Kurdish question and the country's fear of Islamic fundamentalism (Park 2003; Hoffmann 2003; Yavuz 2003; Oran 2004). The background of this threat perception must be seen in the concern of the dominant elites over (a) a break-up of the unified Turkish nation-state along ethnic lines and (b) the emergence of an Islamic fundamentalism that might undermine the secularist order of the Turkish state (Seufert 2002). This threat perception mainly affected Turkey's relations with Syria, Russia, and Iran, on the one hand because of their support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK (Partiya Kark-

aren Kurdistan).[4] On the other hand, the Turkish government pointed the finger of blame at the Iranian leadership for attempts to "export" its theocratic model of polity.

The emergence of new actor constellations due to the shifting domestic power relations in Turkey, coupled with a change in the dominant conception of security and a reformulation of foreign-policy preferences and approaches, ultimately led to a relaxation of tensions. On the one hand, structural integration of the new, rising elites into the political system alleviated tensions in society. On the other hand, though, this development aggravated the political rivalries between "old" and "new" elites over who was to hold the power of definition in the state (Yılmaz 2006; Oran 1999; Boratav 1995; Mardin 2000). It was due to the fear of the "old" elites that they might stand to lose power in view of the fact that the democratic reforms underway at the time – in particular those concerned with bringing Turkey into alignment with EU norms and standards – were accompanied by an enlargement of civil and individual rights and efforts to curtail the privileges of the state elite (Çarkoğlu / Toprak 2006; Kramer 2004; Aydın 2005; Özdemir 2006). Put differently, the process of EU accession called for a course of institutional and legal change geared to putting an end to any domineering and intrusive control of civil affairs by the military-bureaucratic authorities and reducing the permanent state of tension between the military-bureaucratic elite and civil elites and promoting a pluralisation and democratisation of public life in Turkey.

The change in the dominant order in Turkey was above all understood to mean an independent judiciary, a reasonable penal system, respect for the cultural and rights of ethnic and religious minorities as well as for civil rights and liberties in general, and civil control over the military. Up to the end of the 1990s, Turkey had major deficits on all these points (Buzan / Diaz 1999). It is the reforms carried out in recent years that have accelerated the change of the country's political order from a "defective" democracy in which the military was the pivotal factor in political decision-making (Gürbey 2005) to a liberal democracy that offers civil society a larger measure of influence. Even if this has served, gradually, to contain the arbitrary rule of the military-bureaucratic elite, which for years had been justified in the name of stability and national security, Turkey should still be considered as a developing democracy toward consolidation.

2.1 Emerging new actors

The following section starts out by discussing the traditional Kemalist state doctrine, which had guided political action at all levels since 1923, and the main actors within the political system of Turkey. It then goes on to describe the gradual process in which this political order was undermined, giving rise to new power centers. The focus here is on the rise of new power elites and the change experienced by the Islamic-conservative elite, which has held power in Turkey since 2002 and is now among the relevant actors responsible for Turkey's regional foreign policy.

4 Since the mid-1980s the PKK had been engaged in an armed struggle for the independence of southeast Anatolia, a mainly Kurdish region, a conflict that came to a temporary stoppage in 1999 when the organisation's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was arrested and the PKK opted for a cease-fire.

Politically, the official state doctrine of Kemalism (Kemalizm)[5] stood for the unitary, secular nation-state; in economics it subscribed to state dirigisme; and the guiding principles of its foreign policy were a Western orientation, and preservation of national sovereignty. The guiding idea was to establish an ideal social order as well as a state that would form a distinct contrast to the Ottoman system (Bayramoğlu 2006). As secularism and nationalism were the central pillars of Kemalism (Çalış 2001), Islamism and ethnic separatism were regarded as the main security threat because they were thought to have the potential to cast doubt the legitimacy of both the state and the outcome of the modernising reforms.

The concept of secularism held by the Kemalists was based neither on an institutional separation of church and state nor on equal legal-administrative treatment for different religions. In its aspiration to secularism, Kemalism even went so far as to endow the state with a monopoly on interpretation in religious affairs, bureaucratising religious life in order to be better able to control and manage it (Seufert 2004a). This led to heightened tensions between secularist rulers and an Islamist party organisation when the so-called Welfare Party (Refah Partisis – RP) came to power in 1996 and tendencies were observed that seemed to indicate that the RP was pursuing "Islamist" aims both at home and abroad. As it turned out, though, the coalition government headed by Necmetti Erbakan was forced to resign in 1997, and the party was banned (Nachmani 2003; Karaman 1999).[6]

When it came to defining a concept of the nation-state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, sought orientation in the patterns of nationalism he found in Europe at the end of the 19th century. These kinds of ethnic-based nationalisms in turn called for a transformation of the identities of broad segments of the Anatolian population, which were based primarily on religious affiliation (Mardin 1993; Kramer 2004; Keyman 1999). The ethnic heterogeneity of the Anatolian population (consisted of over 40 ethnic groups) made it necessary to start out by creating a Turkish national consciousness. Atatürk did not define the "Turkish nation" on the basis of ethnic, denominational, or religious criteria. For him and his elite, the only "social glue" needed to craft the nation was an avowed sense of "Turkishness." The national idea was based on the indivisible unity of nation and national territory (Oran 1999). Anyone who lived in Turkey, accepted the country's republican principles, and defined him- or herself as a "Turk" was to be entitled to Turkish citizenship. The pillar on which this transformation rested was an assimilation of subidentities effected by the imposition of a "Turkish identity"; this in turn was promoted on the basis of a process of historical, linguistic, and cultural Turkification (Tosun 2002; Oran 2004).

The contradiction at the heart of the Kemalist conception of the nation was that the Kemalists postulated, entirely in the sense of French Jacobinism, that all citizens are equal, while at the same time pursuing a course of ethnic and cultural homogenisation based on the notion that unity and equality (*teklik ve birlik*) are one and the same thing. The concern was that any recognition of minorities could serve to cast doubt on the universal validity of a Turkish supra-identity. The result was a policy of assimilation that turned a blind eye

5 The body of values to which Kemalism subscribes consists of six principles: (1) secularism (laiklik), (2) nationalism (milliyetçilik), (3) republicanism (cumhuriyetçilik), (4) populism (halkçılık), (5) reformism (devrimcilik), and (6) statism (devletçilik).

6 This point will be dealt with at greater length below.

to the cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity of Turkish society. While the consequence of this policy was the assimilation of the Anatolian population in terms of their supra-identities, their subidentities nonetheless remained intact (2004; Cağaptay 2006).[7] Ethnic minorities (like the Kurds) and religious minorities (like the Alevi and the Yazidi) were denied any cultural autonomy. Attempts on the part of these groups to claim participatory political rights in the framework of Turkey's democratic system regularly failed, with the respective political parties being banned. The party ban, an instrument often used in the course of Turkish history, was thus not restricted to Islamist parties like the RP, indeed it was applied frequently to Kurdish parties as well (Ayata 2004).

To push through their radical cultural revolution, Turkey's founding elites fell back on the "strong state," securing for themselves a monopoly on the power of the state over society. In their eyes, the "state" was not an instrument of politics, politics was there to serve the state (Rumpf / Steinbach 2004; Heper 1985). This meant concretely that state authorities served as an instrument to enforce state powers and rights of intervention in the public and private spheres in order to safeguard the principles of Kemalism. The barriers to interference in civil rights and liberties were lowered whenever, in the view of the ruling elite, "national interests" and "republican principles" appeared to be in danger.

The Turkish "state" was embodied by the Kemalist elite: the official state party Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – CHP) (until 1946), the administrative bureaucracy, and the military. Fields thought to be strategically important for the regime's survival – including security, foreign policy, economic affairs, and justice – were controlled by the core Kemalist elite, in particular the military and judicial apparatuses. The powers and possibilities they had to curtail individual rights were broadly expanded in the Constitution of 1982, when a number of new "superbureaucracies" were created. These agencies, which included the Council of Higher Education (to oversee universities and the sciences), state security courts[8], and the High Council for Radio and Television (to oversee the media), stood above the government and were not subject to parliamentary oversight. The country's administrative structures likewise showed signs of a markedly centralist development, and they were not geared merely to providing services and public goods. Their strength was more their ability to exercise political, cultural, and social control than their capacity to engage in rational economic regulation and effective resource policies (Ahmand 1993). These were the factors that enabled this "trinity of power" (Franz 2000; Harris 1988) to retain, largely and until quite recently, its hegemony in politics, economy, and society.

7 The only minorities recognized after the republic had been proclaimed were Christian-Orthodox Greeks, Armenians, and Jews who had remained in the country (EU Commission 1998). This definition of minorities was based on religious rather than ethnic criteria, and this, conversely, meant that religious affiliation (Sunnite) was a key element involved in fashioning a uniform character for the Turkish nation. For it was the inclusion of Islam that made it possible to forge, from what was left of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, a nation that brought together, ethnic Kurds, Laz, Albanians, Bosniaks, Tatars, and so on, declaring them to be "Turks."

8 The state security courts were "expert courts" appointed to deal with punishable acts that were alleged to endanger the integrity of the national territory or the population or the republican form of government and the security of the state. The courts were abolished only in 2004 in connection with the process of convergence with the EU.

When a multi-party system was introduced in 1946, the parties increasingly became the mechanism of transformation. Instead of being driven primarily by ideas and programs, these parties tended far more to secure their existence by developing clientelist relationships. In exchange for political support, politicians provided their influential clientele access to state resources (Ahmad 1993). The first generation of Turkish entrepreneurs was for this reason closely intertwined with politics and the country's economic bureaucracy, and their companies were able to benefit from high tariff barriers and an elaborate system of subsidies (Yavuz / Esposito 1996; Seufert 2000).

Today, in a situation of significant change to Turkey's social and political power structures, the Kemalist paradigm outlined above was increasingly in need of new interpretation. The power of the repressive, ideology-minded ruling apparatus showed signs of growing erosion, and new actors crowded into the political decision-making process. New actors, like the Islamic-conservative bourgeoisie or Kurdish nationalists, seriously challenged the official state doctrine, pointing to the shakiness of the official legitimist ideology, which declared all citizens of the country to be "secular Turks."

One of the main factors driving this transformation process proved to be marked population growth and the urbanisation it entailed as well as the ongoing process of economic change, but also the political reforms the country has since embarked upon in connection with its convergence with the EU. The Turkish government authorities' growing inability to do adequate justice to the development mission assigned to them by Kemal Atatürk further augmented the challenge.

One serious challenge to the ruling Turkish elite emerged in the form of strong population growth and rapid urbanisation in a situation of slow progress in industrialisation.[9] The underdeveloped agrarian regions in Anatolia, typically farmed on a subsistence basis, were unable to offer a perspective for their exploding young population. This is the reason why the sharp development disparity between industrialised and rural regions began to drive urbanisation, and since 1980s the country's urban regions have taken the full brunt of population growth (Mardin 2000). The urban labour markets were unequipped to handle the flow of migrants, and this led to high levels of hidden unemployment and a largely uncontrolled process of urbanisation and slum growth. At the same time, the authorities were increasingly unable to provide basic public services (labour, education, health, judicial) (Mardin 2000). This inefficiency on the part of the public authorities deepened the divide between the establishment and the majority of the population, gradually shaking the confidence of many citizens in the "state" and its institutions (Erdoğan Tosun 2001).

A further challenge emerged in 1982 when the government adopted a course of economic liberalisation, gradually abandoning the statism it had pursued until then, along with its monopolistic position in the economy. Turkey was to achieve international competitiveness on the basis of a comprehensive economic restructuring plan adopted under pressure by the IMF. Dirigisme and protectionism were gradually superseded by a liberal market economy and a new export orientation, accompanied by a comprehensive course of priva-

9 In 1923, the year in which the Turkish Republic was founded, the country had a population of roughly 12 million, by 1960 the figure had risen to close to 30 million, reaching 50 million in 1985 and 70 million as early as 2006. These and the following figures were taken from the website of the State Institute of Statistics; see online: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Start.do (accessed 1 Oct. 2006).

tisation (Özcan 1998). The 1996 customs union between Turkey and the EU served to further accelerate economic liberalisation.

The course of economic reform at first proved unable to halt the permanent crisis from which the Turkish economy was ailing. Inflation and the public debt continued to rise sharply. Income and wealth disparities far above the EU average continued to make themselves felt, as did the divide between the country's relatively developed northwest and its structurally weak southwest.

One main outcome of the economic liberalisation was the rise of a self-confident business class that gradually broke free of state tutelage. The growing private sector developed into a strong counterweight to the unproductive public sector, with a variety of large private corporations emerging, in addition to a number of smaller and medium-size companies, most of which were founded by entrepreneurs from Anatolia, and many of which took on more and more public tasks in the health and education sectors.

In this period religious movements also steeped up their efforts to fill the social vacuum created by the retreat of the public authorities. They developed their own educational infrastructure, set up increasing numbers of social and charitable institutions, and founded media organs, companies, and associations of their own. The new holders of economic power (secular and religious alike) challenged the ruling traditional elite, becoming increasingly involved in debates on economic policy and demanding a voice in public affairs (Simsek 2004).

The process of economic change also had its effects on the country's foreign-policy orientation. The classic paradigm of foreign policy, geared as it was to security, was now broadened to include an economic and an energy dimension. The background must be seen in the rising demand for energy caused by the country's growing industrialisation and in a rising volume of transnational trade (Larrabee / Lesser 2003). These two factors were instrumental in inducing the Turkish leadership to reassess the country's relations with the Middle East and the Caucasus region. Energy reserves like oil and gas became important determinants of Turkey's foreign orientation, since it was forced to import substantial amounts of gas and oil from Russia, Iran, or the Gulf states. Economic actors, like the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜSIAD – Türk Sanayicileri ve Işadamları Derneği), a traditionally Western-oriented body that has focused its lobbying activities on European countries and the issue of Turkey's accession to the EU, or the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB – Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği) or the Independent Industrialists' und Businessmen's Association (MÜSIAD – Müstakil Sanayici ve Işadamları Derneği), both of which have focused primarily on projects in northern Iraq and the Levant, have played a growing role in efforts to pluralise debates in Turkey on foreign and security policy. One thing significantly new was their interest in a Turkish foreign policy geared to internationality and liberal reforms (Kirişçi 2006).

As noted above, far from taking a linear course, the economic upswing in Turkey led into several economic crises. The worst of them, in 1999 and 2001, were mainly political crises, and, thanks to corruption and a lack of political leadership in policy-making, they led the country to the verge of the economic abyss. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), from which Turkey again needed loans to stave off national insolvency, conditioned its

support on a reform of the old, established system of patronage and called on the country to develop a set of more permeable and transparent decision-making structures. Reforms aimed at enhancing the transparency of fiscal policy and a comprehensive reform of the banking sector, together with a serious legitimacy crisis facing the country's politicians, further broadened the political scopes of action of the new economic actors placing the country's political and economic system on a new footing (ibid.).

A number of authors see in the EU accession perspective held out to Turkey since the EU summit in Helsinki in 1999 a catalyst at work in the democratisation process underway in Turkey (Kirişçi 2006). The thesis is that while there was already a good measure of social pressure for democratization at work in the country (Ulusoy 2007), it was only the concrete prospect of accession to the EU that imparted a new dynamic to the country's reform efforts. While even as late as the 1990s the system still dominant in Turkey appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle to efforts on the part of the EU to open the accession process with Turkey (Buzan / Diez 1999; EU Commission 1998), by 2005, the year in which the accession process was officially launched, the situation had changed in fundamental ways.

For instance, between 2001 and 2004 the government initiated a set of comprehensive constitutional amendments and reform packages that were geared to the EU's Copenhagen criteria and served to further democratise the country. A set of far-reaching reforms were carried out to enhance the freedom of speech and underpin the principle of free media and to bolster the rights of free association and assembly; torture was banned and the death penalty abolished; the laws governing foundations and parties were liberalised; and minority rights as well as the rights of women and children were expanded (EU Commission 2004).[10]

The reforms carried out towards the end of protecting minority rights, including more freedom of the press and new media laws that accorded ethnic minorities broadcast time for radio and television, led to a short-lived relaxation of tensions as far as the Kurdish and minority question was concerned. Furthermore, a new statute on learning "languages and dialects spoken by citizens of Turkey in their day-to-day lives" came into force in September 2003.[11] This new rule, which did not mention the word Kurdish, means in effect that it is now generally legal to offer private Kurdish courses in Turkey. And while it is true that a comprehensive overall strategy designed to improve, in structural terms, the socio-economic situation of the people living in southeast Anatolia was still not adopted, the most important development in this connection was the fact that a public discussion emerged on how best to define the Turkish nation, with representatives of government and civil society speaking of Turkey as a mosaic containing a number of sub-identities in addition to the Turkish identity (Kramer 2006; Yavuz / Özcan 2006). Implicitly, this was tantamount to recognition of the reality of a multi-ethnic Turkey – the breaking of a long-standing taboo. As expected, these debates came in for fierce criticism from both leftist and rightist nationalist groups (Yavuz / Özcan 2006).

A good number of observers both in Turkey and abroad have voiced scepticism over the degree of backing for and consolidation of the reforms (Yazıcıoğlu 2005). They see a con-

10 For these constitutional amendments and reforms, see online: http://www.belgenet.com/yasa/ab_uyum7-1.html (accessed 10 Oct. 2006).

11 See online: http://www.belgenet.com/yasa/ab_uyum7-1.html (accessed 1 Oct. 2006).

firmation of their fears in the flagging enthusiasm for reforms shown by the government since 2005. One good reason for this scepticism is that instead of originating in the country itself, the reforms carried out since 2001 have been imposed "from outside," viz. as conditionalities for Turkey's access to the EU. Nathalie Tocci, for instance, underlines that the EU has played an important role in the democratisation of Turkey, in particular by providing political and structural support for the efforts of Turkish decision-makers in carrying out reforms (Tocci 2005). She distinguishes between the trigger function and the anchor function of the EU accession perspective, emphasising that while the internal social pressure for change and reform was in fact very heavy, it was only the perspective of accession to the EU and the associated material and political support received from Brussels that set the stage for the reforms to implement.

Before we look into the question why the government in power at that time, i. e. the Islamic-conservative Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) government, forcefully pursued the adoption of EU standards, we must note here that even the EU is unable to compel refractory elites to work for democratisation. A far-reaching reform process of this kind can simply not get off the ground if the country concerned lacks the actors and backers needed for a successful democratisation process. This goes for political actors as well as for backing in society at large. Still, the EU continues to be a central figure in the Turkish reform process: both the time at which reforms were launched (in 1999, as soon as Turkey had received the EU accession perspective) and the substance of the reforms (which were keyed to the EU's acquis communautaire) point clearly to influence from Brussels. Without in any way minimising the successes of Turkish civil society, it is still clear that the legal and political "revolution" the country experienced between 2001 and 2004 was not only and in all respects a "bottom-up revolution."

Studies on the Europeanization of the eastern European countries come to the conclusion that external incentive systems and conditionalities tend to spark transformation within a country when the benefits anticipated from compliance with conditionality stand in a reasonable relation to the costs that are expected to result from engaging in reforms (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005). Put differently, the probability that the rulers of a country set for transformation will comply with conditionality is greater when they see reforms as a means of increasing their power, both external and internal.

Turkey's Islamic-conservative AKP government, which has imparted a new dynamic to the process of convergence with the EU, in just a few years abandoned its resolute opposition to EU accession, placing itself at the forefront of the reform movement in Turkey. Up to the 1990s, the majority of the Islamist movement was nationalistic, antiliberal, antisocialist, and in favour of statism and efforts to soften up, if not indeed to abolish wholly, the strict secularism to which Turkey was committed (Rashwan 2007; Kramer 2000; Türköne 1994). The aim was the restoration of conservative moral precepts and the establishment of an Islamic system patterned on the Ottoman Empire – in short, a moral regeneration of the country based on a "just order" (adil düzen), one patterned on the ideal of the Umma, which seemed to offer a frame of reference for political rule and social order.[12]

12 The phase of political Islam in Turkey got underway with Necmettin Erbakan (1969–1998) (Dağı 1998). His election strategy was to mobilize the poorer urban segments of the population and the country's small and mid-sized companies, which found themselves on the loser side of economic liberalisation. His party, the Welfare Party (RP), became a vehicle for the religious-conservative bourgeoisie, which

After the forced resignation of the Welfare Party (RP) in 1997 was a split in the Islamist camp between conservatives and reformists (Dağı 2008). Conservatives and reactionary adherents of the RP found a new home in the Felicity Party while the reformers founded the AKP in 2001. The differences between the two parties were rooted mainly in their divergent conceptions of the state and the economy, with the traditionalists tending more to be state-oriented and to favour dirigisme and the reformers tending more to seek support in society and to favour a (liberal) market economy (Cağaptay 2002; Çarkoğlu 2002).

The AKP's emergence marked the birth of a reformist Islamist movement in Turkey and led Turkish Islamism into a new phase of political rationality (Rashwan 2007). Most of the party's leadership and intermediate-level cadres have a well-known history as activists of the Islamist movement. The most prominent of these figures is party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the current President of the Turkish Republic Abdullah Gül, both of whom are long-time disciples of Necmettin Erbakan. That is the main reason why many militant secularists still believe that the AKP has a "hidden Islamic agenda", which it hopes to enact gradually to avoid a repeat of the conflict between the RP and the state authorities in 1997.

While the AKP remained openly committed to its Islamic roots and values, it raised claims to be a conservative party in conformity with the existing secular system and described itself as an ideological combination of spiritual Islam and political secularism. It compared its own political philosophy, conservative democracy, with the conservatism professed by the German Christian-Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union – CDU) (Gülalp 2005; Schönbohm 2003). The AKP's stated aim was to reform the elitist and strict secularism in place in Turkey – an aim, though, that it, unlike its predecessor party, sough to reach not by abolishing Turkey's secularist system but by building a new, liberal pluralism. In practical terms, this also involved a demand to rescind the authority invested in the Turkish Department of Religious Affairs, which oversees the country's religious institutions, and to lift the ban on wearing the headscarf in public spaces (in particular at universities).

The background of this process of change was quite diverse in nature. For one thing, the change had to do with the advent of a new generation of leaders. The leadership team around Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül had a different conception of politics, having been socialised politically not so much amid the reactionary theological discussions of the 1960s as during the 1980s, the period of market liberalisation (Gündem 2007). The experiences gained during that era strengthened their pragmatism and led to a turn away from the aim of creating a social order based on Islam while embracing the goal of an economic modernisation of Turkey.

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not only was in search of a political voice but also demanded a share in the country's economic growth (Çakır 1994).

Erbakan set new accents in foreign policy, calling for Turkey to turn away from the West and seek its orientation in the Islamic world (Gürbey 1997; Özcan 1998). He sought, for instance, to forge a Turkish-led security alliance with other Muslim countries, as a counterpole to NATO. Erbakan's diplomatic practices came in for sharp criticism from the Turkish media, but also from the military and the foreign ministry, and the result was a vote of no-confidence in the Turkish Parliament, which the military cited as grounds to force the Erbakan government to resign.

This change was driven by a number of Turkish domestic developments in the 1990s that served to consolidate the AKP's sense for the politically feasible. The failures with which its predecessor parties had met clearly indicated that no social consensus could be reached on the basis of an ideologically lopsided political programme. If they were to win majorities, they had to position themselves closer to the political centre since the majority of Turkish muslims was against the abolishment of the secular order. Against this background, Bayramoğlu also interprets the process of change within the Islamist camp as a strategy of adaptation to the altered needs of the Islamic-conservative segments of the Turkish population (Bayramoğlu 2006).[13]

This internal transformation of the Islamist movement was closely linked with a shift in its foreign-policy priorities, as the new stance on EU accession clearly showed. The AKP declared accession to the EU to be an absolute priority of Turkey's foreign policy (Grigoriadis 2004). There were two important reasons for this. On the one hand, the AKP hoped in this way to win an election that it could not possibly have won without the backing of the country's pro-European economic actors and media corporations. On the other hand, the party hoped to be able to enlarge its room for political manoeuvre vis-à-vis the military-bureaucratic establishment by committing itself to the process of convergence with the EU and the reforms that this entailed. Islamists – like ethnic minorities – saw the EU and the reforms it was calling on Turkey to implement to meet the Copenhagen criteria as a mechanism that would serve to shield the position they held within Turkish society, for they were convinced that convergence with EU standards implied a redefinition of the relationship between "state" and "society" – and in particular of the role played in this connection by the Turkish military (Arslan 2005; Grigoriadis 2004; Ayata 2004; Yavuz / Özcan 2006).

With regard to the AKP's foreign policy, it differed in two important respects from that pursued by its predecessor governments. In the first place, the AKP government stepped up its efforts to position itself as an "honest broker" between Western countries, in particular the US and the EU, and the "Islamic world," in particular the countries of the Middle East. On the other hand, it based its foreign policy on its belief in the peace-promoting effects of economic interdependence and active membership in international organisations (Kirisci 2006). The guidelines used to settle regional conflicts were to include proactive approaches, engagement, and dialogue in the place of isolation, confrontation, and containment.

In conceptual terms the AKP's foreign policy was based on the concept of "strategic depth" developed by Ahmet Davutoğlu (Davutoğlu 2001), Prime Minister Erdoğan's closest foreign-policy advisor. Its stated intention was to establish Turkey as a regional force for peace and stability. The point of departure must be sought in Turkey's geographic location at the interface between Europe and Asia, and in the country's history, which was seen as reflecting its identity as a democratic and pro-Western nation with a mainly Mus-

13 Empirical studies support the thesis of a growing secularisation and democratisation of Turkish society. The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı – TESEV), for instance, has determined that while the number of persons referring to themselves as "very religious" grew from 36 % to 46 % between 1999 and 2006, in the same period the level of acceptance for a "Sharia state" declined from 21 % to 9 %, and the number or people advocating a radical transformation of society in the form of an abolition of secularism fell from 19 % to 6 % (Çarkoğlu / Toprak 2006; Yılmaz 2006).

lim population – a situation that seemed to predestine Turkey to assume the role of a regional intermediary. By pursuing national interests and turning to account its geographic location and special historical relations with the countries in the region, Turkey was to build a multidimensional network of foreign relations, setting the stage for the country to become an influential power with a strong regional outreach (Çetinsaya 2005).

One of the basic principles underlying this concept was a good-neighbour policy geared to solving bilateral problems ("zero-problem policy") (Davutoğlu 2004). Accordingly, if it was to be influential in the region, Turkey had to formulate a policy that overcame boundaries and encompassed all neighbouring regions – including neighbouring countries like Syria or Armenia, which had strained relations with Turkey (ibid.). One element of this policy was to place Turkey's relations to its neighbours on a rational-pragmatic footing and to minimise mutual threat perceptions by seeking to create political and economic interdependencies (Davutoğlu 2004). It was in this way that the new foreign policy was enlarged to include the economic dimension.

Another principle was to formulate and craft a multidimensional foreign policy keyed to Turkey's central geographic location. Against the background of a set of regional and international developments that seemed to indicate the emergence of a multipolar world order, it was argued, Turkey needed to abandon a foreign policy keyed to transatlantic parameters in favour of a multidimensional approach (ibid.). Davutoğlu advocated close cooperation with Russia in the Caspian region, continuation of Turkey's close and strategic ties with the EU and the US, and cooperation with the neighbouring countries of the Middle East on the basis of national interests.

Another feature of the changing actor constellations in Turkey was the rising influence of civil society (e. g. business associations or ethnic lobby groups), a development that was reflected in a pluralisation of debates on foreign relations. As noted above, the civil society structures in Turkey tended to be weakly developed, with any and every autonomous dynamic emerging from society being eyed with the greatest suspicion by the state elite. The latter sought minimise the effects of civil society activism by co-opting civil society actors, channelling their activities or banning their organisations (Göksel / Güneş 2005).

It was only toward the end of the 1990s that the activities of civil society started to unfold a new dynamic as a counterweight to the centralist state. In earlier years the escalation of the civil conflict in southeast Anatolia had set narrow limits to any engagement of civil society, with the whole of public space in Turkey dominated by the repressive measures taken to "protect the unitary and secularist Republic," i. e. in the context of the military struggle to defeat the PKK. Any political engagement of civil society came in for suspicion as "anti-Republic" activities. All criticism of the official policy pursued by the government, the military, and the bureaucracy was prosecuted, that is, de facto banned.

Starting in 1999, Turkish civil society started to reap the benefits of both the cease-fire with the PKK, which contributed to easing social tensions, and the new legal and political course adopted in connection with the process of convergence with the EU. New legislation was passed to lower the legal barriers to the foundation of organizations or associations and to curtail the official authorities' powers of control and intervention. Furthermore, the financial support provided by the EU in the framework of its Promotion of Civil Society Dialogue programme was instrumental in ensuring that more organisations and

associations achieved financial autonomy and were able to develop an agenda of their own (Göksel / Güneş 2005).

Starting in 1999, civil society gradually developed into a kind of transmission belt for social interests. Since then numerous Kurdish, Alevi, feminist, environmental, and other social movements have either emerged or succeeded in enhancing their profile (Keyman / Içduygu 2003; Göle 1994). They have made use of their growing mobilisation power, raising political demands, e. g. for more political participation (Kadıoğlu 2005; Boratav 1995; Heper 1992; TOBB 2004), an enlargement of civil rights, e. g. the right to lodge constitutional complaints against state institutions (TBB 2001; TOBB 2000), a lowering of the 10 % barrier for parties fielding candidates for Parliament (TOBB TÜSIAD 1999), structural reform of the National Security Council (TÜSIAD 1997; TÜSIAD 1999), and amendments to Turkey's party statute (Gençkaya 2000).[14]

As impressive as the evolution of Turkish civil society may be, it still remains to be seen how it will develop in the future. Some of the actors referred to above have only recently emerged, and they will need time to consolidate their organisational structures and to gain traction in public space. Both the level of organisation of the population and the memberships of associations and other organisations continue to be low compared with the civil society landscapes in EU member states. The medium-term funding situation for civil society projects also continues to be uncertain.

2.2 New institutional power relations

The balance of power in Turkey' institutional system is also shifting increasingly in favour of civilian decision-makers. The number of actors involved in the formulation of foreign policy has risen substantially since the period of internal stabilisation that followed the ceasefire with the PKK in 1999, and this has tended to "de-militarise" foreign policy in the sense of containing the influence of the military (Kirişçi 2006). Traditionally, Turkish foreign policy was in the hands of diplomats, bureaucrats, and generals, with civilian-political elites under the supervision of the military chief-of-staff – a situation that led to a permanent state of tension between civilian and military authorities.

This dichotomy of state power, institutionalised under the Constitution, gave rise at times to two different, and in part contradictory, foreign-policy agendas, with the government on

14 Turkish civil society's major success was the mobilisation work it did in the period leading up to the adoption of Turkey's first comprehensive reform package in August 2002. The package – which was opposed by the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and non-parliamentary nationalist circles – had sparked an intense public debate. Pro-Europe associations, ad hoc groups, and media campaigns were instrumental in securing the right majority in Parliament, and this ultimately led to the adoption of the reform package. Various associations and movements (including TÜSIAD), the Economic Development Foundation (Iktisadi Kalkinma Vakfi – IKV), and the Human Rights Association (Insan Haklari Dernegi) launched a number of bi- and multilateral projects with European partners designed to back Turkey's accession to the EU and to put pressure on decision-makers. In 2002, 157 associations joined forces to form the European Movement (Avrupa Hareketi). The so-called Turkey Platform was created under the aegis of the IKV, and as early as 2004 the organisation had a membership of 269 pro-Europe non-governmental organisations. Universities and research institutions likewise set up numerous EU information and documentation centres with a view to engaging in pro-Europe publicity work of their own.

the one side and the foreign ministry bureaucracy, which was close to the military, subscribing to two different orientations in foreign policy, with the one side, according to Heinz Kramer, representing "politics," the other embodying "the state" (Kramer 2004; Makovsky 1999).

The background of this dualism must be sought in both ideological and structural factors. Looking at the structural aspect, it can be said that any weakness on the part of Turkish governments virtually automatically led to an increase in the power wielded by the generals. The reason for this was that thanks to the fragmented Turkish party landscape, and the fragility of large-scale coalitions, during the 1990s stable government majorities tended more to be the exception than the rule. The ideological principles of the state, anchored in the Constitution, accorded a privileged position to the military. And ultimately, growing security threats at home and abroad paved the generals' way to the top echelon of decision-making. The exercise of power by the military by a (sometimes) voluntary renunciation of power by broad segments of Turkey's civilian elites, who subscribed to the then dominant view that the task of safeguarding national security was primarily a military concern (Özcan 1994), while any active engagement of civil society in security discourses was seen as unwelcome, if not indeed taboo.

The culmination of the Turkish military's power over foreign policy included military operations in northern Iraq (in 1995, 1997), which were conducted without any consultations with Parliament, even though they would formally have required parliamentary approval. Further examples would include tense confrontations between Turkey and Greece (1996) and Syria (1998) that came close to open warfare.

While structural reforms of the National Security Council (NSC) – the central body used by the military to wield influence on the political process – carried out in connection with convergence with EU standards failed to curtail the military's influence on the formulation of foreign policy, the NSC in fact redefined itself, assuming a more "civil" character in the process. This made it possible to boost the body's effectiveness, and since then the disparity between afore mentioned "state policy" and "government policy" has increasingly diminished.

The powerful role played by the military in the NSC was chiefly a consequence of the political vacuum left behind by the fragmentation of the Turkish party system and the de facto collapse of the major parties. In this situation the role of stabilising the political system fell to the military. In the period between 1994 and 1999 the executive branch of government was weakened by fragmentation, and a lack of leadership. It was only in the years between 1999 and 2002 that a leftist-nationalist-conservative government coalition (Demokrat-Sosyal Partisi – DSP, Milliyetci Hareket Partisi – MHP, Anavatan Partisi – ANAP) brought the country a period of relative stability, including a measure of continuity in foreign policy under Foreign Minister Ismail Cem from the Democratic Left Party (Demokrat-Sosyal Partisi – DSP). In this period Ismail Cem set the stage for a new Turkish foreign policy the effects of which are still felt today. He came out in favour of the concept of a "regional neighbourhood policy" calling for more engagement in its neighbourhood, especially close ties with Greek, and advocating efforts to step up a cooperation with neighbouring countries in the Middle East and the Caspian region aimed at safeguarding Turkish interests. However, the marked heterogeneity of the ruling coalition, various centrifugal forces within the executive, and the political instability caused and

perpetuated by the severe economic crises the county experienced between 1999 and 2001 led to massive tensions within the government and blocked the realisation of a number of political projects (Insel / Bozyigit 2005).

There were also other factors that worked in favour of the military's ability to act on its own. At that time, for instance, there was no institutionalised parliamentary oversight of the military-bureaucratic elite (the general staff was not subordinate to the defence ministry); the military was in possession of extensive means to influence and interfere in the work of the administrative bureaucracy; the military had intelligence services and tribunals of its own that were not subject to civilian control; and the military budget was autonomous by law. In addition, the military secured its financial autonomy in part by operating businesses of its own, which were tax-exempt and eligible to receive government subsidies.

The National Security Council (NSC) [15] was the central body through which the military exerted influence on the formulation of policy. The NSC's constitutional mandate was to protect the Kemalist system from threats from at home and abroad, and it gave the generals wide latitude when it came to defining threats. And this is the basis on which it has legitimised military interventions conceived to uphold the Kemalist system. Thus far the military has intervened in this way three times directly and at least once indirectly.[16]

Originally conceived as a consultative body and an interface for coordinating cooperation between government institutions and the military, starting in 1982, the NSC was developed into the country's most relevant national decision-making body, an institution with the power to block virtually any policy. While de jure the NSC had no direct veto power in the political process, de facto the military's legally fixed parity with the executive in the NSC and the latter's general guideline powers gave the generals an extensive measure of influence that in effect amounted to a political veto (Özdemir 2006).

The NSC was tasked with preparing resolutions and policy recommendations bearing on "the protection of national security." Thanks to the broad way in which national security was defined, it was possible to subsume all aspects of domestic, foreign, and security policy under it. This broad scope for interpretation gave the statements and recommendations issued by the NSC a powerful influence on the political process, since governments were

15 The members of the NSC, which is chaired by the Turkish president, include the prime minister, the defence minister, the ministers for foreign and domestic affairs, the chief of the general staff, and the commanders of the country's army, navy, air force, and gendarmerie.

16 Pointing to the alleged need to prevent an "Islamisation of the Republic," on 27 May 1960 a number of young officers staged a coup, toppling the conservative government of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. He was subsequently hanged along with the finance minister and the foreign minister.
On 12 March 1971 the military again revolted, claiming that the country was on the verge of sliding into chaos in connection with a severe economic crisis accompanied by terrorist acts carried out by elements recruited from the leftist and rightist extremes of the country's political spectrum. The elected government was deposed and a new government appointed to replace it.
On 12 September 1980 the military assumed power for the third time. The move was sparked by a phase of instability in the 1970s that brought with it a number of fragile political coalitions, political and economic instability, and acts of terrorism. On 7 November 1982 a new Constitution presented by the military was adopted in a referendum. The new Constitution gave the leadership of the Turkish state a comprehensive set of new means to curtail the political rights of Turkish citizens.
In 1997 the military intervened again, this time indirectly, calling, in a number of NSC resolutions adopted on 28 February 1997, for the government led by Necmettin Erbakan to resign.

obliged by law to implement them. In practice this arrangement severely restricted the role played by the executive in government affairs, and when it came to security or defence issues, the NSC was either not or only insufficiently accountable to the Parliament (EU Commission 2000).

The NSC's secretary-general had an important function in this connection. Up to the set of structural reforms carried out in 2004, the secretary-general, invariably a high-ranking officer, was appointed by the military. He was authorized to issue instructions to the foreign, domestic affairs, and justice ministries, and he oversaw the country's domestic and foreign intelligence services. He was invested with guideline powers similar to those held by the prime minister; he was something on the order of a "parallel government," since he was able to "direct the activities of the ministries and the state bureaucracy as a whole" (Seufert / Kubaseck 2006). This gave the NSC the appearance of a centre of political decision-making, though one that was accountable neither to Parliament nor to the population. This enabled to the military to control the corridors of power and to *"have government and Parliament stage a play that the military itself had virtually written"* (Insel / Bozyiğit 2005).

One element of the reforms conducted with a view to convergence with the EU was a restructuring of the role of the military in keeping with EU standards and a provision restricting the military's powers to the fields of security and defence. This made the NSC over into a consultative body without any decision-making powers. The reforms restricted the military's powers of access to civil institutions, while strengthening the prime minister's decision-making and oversight powers in the NSC. Other measures designed to curtail the military's influence on politics included measures to create fiscal transparency, to give Parliament control over military spending, and to ban military courts from trying civilian cases.[17]

These far-reaching structural reforms and restrictions on the influence of the military were made possible by a) growing social pressure for democratic reforms, and in particular for a perspective for accession to the EU; b) a growing measure of political and economic stability starting in 2002, a development that at the same time increased the government's room for manoeuvre; and c) an emerging new self-conception on the part of the military, in particular as far as its role in the political process was concerned. Even in the course of recent years, key issues bearing on Turkey's security have sparked heated debates between representatives of the military, a fact which seems to indicate the existence of a number of different currents within the military apparatus.[18] At least three currents have taken concrete shape in the course of the past decade.

The general staff has traditionally followed a nationalist-Kemalist doctrine based on rejection of any opening of the political system at home and any ties to Western countries that might require Turkey to abandon national interests. This particular wing of today's mili-

17 See online: http://www.belgenet.com/yasa/ab_uyum7-1.html (accessed 1 Oct. 2006).

18 The internal structures of the Turkish military apparatus continue to be intransparent, preventing outsiders from gaining much insight into them. This is why it is, at present, impossible to come up with any precise analyses of the power relations inside the Turkish military. The different connotations of public statements made by individual military functionaries permit us to assume that various currents within the military apparatus are engaged in power struggles over the institution's monopoly on interpretation.

tary accuses the EU, with its calls for more pluralism and democracy, of pursuing a "secret agenda" designed to split Turkey. And for ideological reasons it rejects both cooperation with countries of the Middle East and a proactive neighbourhood policy. Retired Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt (2006–2008) was one prominent representative of this current.

Another current ideologically close to the one outlined above consists of a group of pro-US nationalists. At home representatives of this current advocate an uncompromising line towards Islamists and ethnic minorities, while in foreign policy it is in favour of close ties to the US and Israel, arguing that neither of these countries imposes domestic conditionalities for cooperation. Chief of Staff Ismail Hakkı Karadayı (1994–1998) was one prominent representative of this current. Another highly prominent representative was Çevik Bir, member of the Turkish General Staff in the 1990s and one of the architects of the 1997 coup that toppled the RP government.

The third current is the "reform wing" of the military, whose most prominent representative was Retired Chief of Staff Hilmi Özkök (2002–2006). At home he stood for democratisation, and in foreign policy he was in favour of close ties with the EU. While this group continues to see its role as a guardian of the Kemalist legacy, it takes an undogmatic approach when it comes to interpreting the relevant principles and sees a need for the Turkish military to develop a new conception of itself (Bardakci 2008). Özkök had a divergent understanding of "national security" than his predecessors and came out against any exaggerated military interference in politics (Özkök 2004). He maintained a stable working relationship with the AKP government, a fact due both to his own liberal-democratic persuasions and the judicious nature of the AKP's dealings with the military apparatus at that time (Bardakci 2008).

His successor, Yaşar Büyükanıt, defined the fronts in his inaugural address in August 2006, when he pointed to a number of clear-cut "red lines": He adamantly rejected any concessions to ethnic separatism or attempts to ease the state policy of secularism, while on the other hand he underlined his conviction that "forces from abroad" were continuing to seek to split Turkey (Büyükanıt 2006). The address was a clear reflection of the army's traditional worldview. Büyükanit's working relations with the AKP were less harmonious, and for this reason there was talk of a "new era" of civil-military relations (Bardakci 2008).

The continuing course of these intra-military debates will without doubt be one of the most important determinants of the ongoing modernisation process in Turkey. While the reforms have curtailed the military's influence on Turkey's political system in formal terms, the military still has the right to take action on its own if it sees security threats emerging. In addition, the military apparatus continues to have the task of preparing drafts of the national security strategy in the framework of the NSC which gives him to a certain extent the power for agenda-setting. Military officials also continue to use informal channels, like the media, to exert influence on public debates (Bardakci 2008). And finally, the military continues to operate autonomously when it comes to questions of military organisation, doctrine, and education (EU Commission 2007; Çaycı 2006).

As pointed out in the chapter above, the emergence of new institutional power relations has entailed a shift in the dominant conception of security and a reformulation of foreign-

policy preferences. The following section outlines the concrete effects this process of change has had on Turkish policy towards the Middle East and the Caspian region.

3 Turkey, a driver of regional cooperation?

3.1 Turkey in the Middle East

Turkey's relations with the neighbouring countries of the Middle East are a particularly good example for describing the shift in Turkish regional foreign policy.[19] As mentioned above, Turkey has avoided any engagement in the region since the foundation of the Republic in 1923 (Bazoğlu Sezer 1995). Only in the early 1990s was this reversed, with the Middle East assuming paramount priority for the political and military elites in Ankara, motivated primarily by security needs. The new activism was reflected, among other things, in Turkey's military cooperation with Israel, its military confrontation with Syria, and a set of political-ideological tensions with Iran (Altunışık 2005). In the 1990s Turkey in this way showed that it was ready to make use of military power as a means of policy as long as national interests were of concern.

However, the shift in Turkey's Middle East Policy appears to indicate that Turkey is in the process of developing into a regional power intent on using bi-and multilateral delivery channels in politics, business, and culture to secure for itself a durably influential role in the region. One turning point in this regard may be seen in the arrest in 1999 of Adullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the relaxation of the social climate in Turkey that accompanied it – opening up the path for reforms at home and regional cooperation with Syria and Iran. The accession of the AKP to power in 2002 and the foreign policy concept the new government adopted accelerated the new approach in dealing with its Middle East neighbours, while the start of the Iraq war in 2003 made it imperative to cooperate with the neighbours. The war led to a shift in the strategic balance of power and triggered deep structural changes in the region (Perthes 2004). The countries of the region were forced fall back on political balancing acts to safeguard their interests. This tended to increase the importance of how these countries' positioned themselves politically and how far they were prepared to go in diversifying their foreign relations (ibid.). This led to a shift in the way Turkey was perceived by Syria and Iran, both of which, finding themselves under an uncomfortably close scrutiny from US Middle East policy, were forced to look for new partners.

Starting in 2003, the new course of coordination between Ankara, Teheran, and Damascus was based on new security perceptions and overlapping interests. As states neighbouring directly on Iraq, all three countries were interested in seeing a stable Iraq and rejected the formation of an independent Kurdish state, in part because all three have Kurdish minorities and feared that Kurdish independence would lead to internal unrest and destabilisation along their own borders. Viewed from the Syrian and Iranian perspective, another strong factor driving a rapprochement with Turkey must be seen in the new regional power constellations that emerged in connection with the Iraq war. These induced Damascus and Teheran to take a new look at their regional relations (Oktav 2004), for, encircled and

19 For an overview of the Middle East as a regional subsystem, see Perthes (2000) and Stein (1997).

branded as "rogue states," Teheran and Damascus found themselves under growing pressure to search for new regional partners (Aras 2005). A series of security consultations held in the framework of regional meetings in the period leading up to the Iraq war finally tipped the scales in favour of dialogue at the political and economic level.

Rapprochement with Syria and Iran went hand in hand with shifts in the relations between Turkey and Israel. This change in Turkey's security situation and the general thrust of its interests virtually automatically altered the parameters of the close strategic relationship between Turkey and Israel. The approach originally pursued was rooted chiefly in security and military considerations, but since then the focus has shifted increasingly to economic cooperation and regional interdependence. A diversification of Turkish-Israeli relations, originally concentrated mainly on military cooperation, was brought about by boosting cooperation in the fields of business and trade, culture, science, tourism, and technology (Özcan 2005). What this meant in effect was that alongside the strategic dimension, economic interests assumed a growingly important role for the Israeli-Turkish alliance, thus strengthening the civil dimension of the relationship.[20]

In recent years the governments as well as publics of the Middle East have taken a closer look at domestic developments in Turkey. Apart from the economic success, the main focus here is the integration of a party of former Islamists, the AKP, into the country's legal political system (Fuller 2004). Especially in the wake of 9/11/2001, both the Turkish government and European and US decision-makers have pointed to Turkey's image as a "model state." In the 1990s two of the strongest arguments advanced against any role of this kind for Turkey were that the country had little credibility in that it was not sufficiently democratic and that its ambivalent historical relationship to the Arab countries made Turkey unacceptable to them as a "role model" or intermediary.

A number of authors examined the credibility and potential of Turkey to be an intermediary, or promoter of modernisation in the Middle East, after the reform process it went through since 1999 (Altunışık 2005; Aras 2005; Fuller 2004). This question is concerned primarily with the symbolic content of the Turkish model of development, its ability to project values, that is, to prove that, far from being merely peculiar features of the "West", democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, and political modernity are also compatible with societies with a Muslim majority (Perthes 2004), as is emphasised by Harald Müller (2003):

> *"Proof of the possibility of a successful, liberal, tolerant, and democratic modernisation, of the possibility of a large country with a majority Muslim population to live in peace and harmony with Christian Western democracies, serves to create a new point of reference for young people in Islamic countries. What we find here at the symbolic level is one of the most effective instruments available against efforts by fundamentalism and its violent offshoots to radicalise and fanaticise society."*

In order to bolster the attraction of Turkey's development model, it was necessary to prove at the political level, that an Islamic-conservative worldview and enlightened democratic

20 In 2005 the volume of bilateral trade was 2 billion US dollars, a figure six times higher than that reported for 1996. The water trade is of particular significance in this connection. In 2004 the two countries signed a water agreement committing Turkey to supply an annual 50 million m^3 of water to Israel over the course of the coming 20 years, a quantity sufficient to cover 4 % of Israel's water needs.

values could be compatible. Until the establishment of the AKP in 2001 it was difficult to find stalwart evidence that could have stand up to any more exact test: While the officially authorised parties in Turkey were all, at least to a certain degree, democratic, they were beholden to a rigid conception of secularism and showed no outward signs of identification with Islam (Altunışık 2005; Aras 2005). On the other hand, while the Islamist parties were able to point to their "Islamic roots," their power base within the society was limited and they were not especially democratic (Altunışık 2005). The AKP has come the closest yet to constituting a synthesis of the two aspects: Far from rejecting the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, including secularism and republicanism, it openly embraced them (ibid.). In seeking to integrate, politically, the Islamist current in Turkish society into the country's democratic system, Turkish democracy assumed a new quality, one that has taken on model character for the Muslim countries, as noted by Wulf Schönbohm, former representative of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Turkey (Kirchmann 2002).

The process of internal democratisation has gone hand in hand with a gradual change in the ways Turkey was perceived in the Arab publics. Historically rooted reservations vis-à-vis the one-time colonial ruler have continuously diminished. Turkey's rejection of the US request in 2003 to use Turkish territory as a staging ground to open a second front in the Iraq war precipitously boosted Turkey's prestige in the region. And the Turkish government's criticism of Israel's unilateral Palestine policy in 2004 had become more focused and audible than that voiced by many statesmen from the Middle East. This did not go unnoticed in the ongoing discussions on modernisation and democratisation in the region. To cite an example, Nader Fergany, co-author of the UN's Arab Development Report and an influential contributor to the scholarly debate in Egypt, asked how it was possible for the Turkish prime minister to be more critical than the Arab governments:

> *"[…] The contrast between Erdoğan's stand and that of Arab leaders may seem puzzling, but is not. Erdoğan was democratically elected and, therefore, accountable to the nation that put him into office. No nation that lives in freedom and under good governance would brook injustice, even towards others. Nor can leaders elected in free and fair elections afford to ignore the feelings of their people. Is there a lesson here?"* (Al Ahram Weekly, 10–16 Juni 2004)

Turkey's national (democratisation and economic growth) and international (EU accession perspective) successes have earned the country growing respect in the Arab world (Seufert 2004b). The fact that Turkey has been able to modernise without having to abandon the country's Muslim identity has propelled the "Turkish model" – a synthesis of secularist-democratic polity and Muslim identity – into the centre of democracy debates in the region (Rashwan 2007).

The change of government in Turkey in 2002 also strengthened the political will in the country to provide active support for modernisation efforts in the region. In a departure from the practices of the past, governmental voices were now calling for an active role of Turkey in promoting the modernisation of the Muslim societies in the Middle East. The point that led to an active engagement on the part of Ankara was reached at the summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Teheran in May of 2003, when Abdullah Gül, the Turkish foreign minister at that time, for the first time called on the organisation's members to "set their own house in order," to forge on with democratisation, to engage in self-criticism, and to listen more to the voice of rationality (Park 2005; Altunisik 2005; Kirişçi 2004). He explicitly saw a role for Turkey as an intermediary:

> *"Turkey is in a position to be an intermediary that can promote universal values shared with the West, such as democracy, human rights, the supremacy of the law and a market economy in the region."* (Gül 2003)

Alongside its efforts on the declaration front, Turkey also assumed an active role in various dialogue initiatives, e. g. launched by the G8 in 2004. Furthermore, in November 2005 Turkey, together with Spain and under the aegis of the UN, initiated the "Alliance of Civilizations," an effort aimed at institutionalising, at the highest level, the dialogue between the "West" and the "Islamic world" (*Turkish Daily News* 16 July 2005; *International Herald Tribune* 06 Feb. 2006).

Despite such positive developments in Turkish-Arab relations, it must be noted that the impacts of Turkey's engagement and reform-minded currents in the Middle East – be they of a more Islamic-conservative or liberal bent – depends on at least three factors that are accessible only to indirect influence from Turkey and thus set objective limits to Turkey's engagement. For one thing, the Arab reform movements need a political framework on the national level that sets the stage for civil society activities and offers points of departure for their integration into the national political system. For another, it is of vital importance to undertake efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of the population in order to secure its assent to reforms. In the third place, it is essential that progress be made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, since a sustainable development of the region is virtually inconceivable without a durable settlement of the conflict. As long as no progress is made in these three areas – and Turkey has little influence here – Turkey has no more than limited options to "promote values" in the region.

3.2 Turkey in the Caspian region

Since the late 1990s Turkey's policy toward the Caspian region[21] has also shifted from a primacy of geopolitics to a new focus on economic relations. The central lines that exemplify this shift include the relations between Turkey and Russia and the relationship between Ankara and Armenia, which in the 1990s was inextricably bound up with the sharp tensions in the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Both axes have been marked by a greater measure of pragmatism.

The assumption of power by the AKP in 2002 had important impacts here as well. In view of the importance the concept of "strategic depth" now assigned by Turkey to an active realpolitic based on pragmatic bilateral relations, the region came more than before the focus of the Turkish economy. Turkey's primary goal continued to be to underpin its geo-economic position by further developing the role it plays as an energy terminal and to safeguard its own energy security. By developing the country into an energy corridor between the Caspian region and the markets of the Western industrialized countries, Turkey furthermore sought to become the fourth pillar of Europe's energy supply structure – after Norway, Russia, and Algeria. This seemed to hold promise as a means of strengthening Turkey's bargaining position vis-à-vis Europe, safeguarding Turkey's own energy secu-

21 For the Caspian region subsystem, see List (2004) and Halbach (2002).

rity, and providing a development-related contribution to stabilising the neighbouring region.[22]

Turkey reformulated its Caspian policy in 1991, when the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia gained their independence. Ankara's activism must be seen chiefly as a response to the structural changes in the regional security environment triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This set of events opened up options for the country to develop a new Turkish sphere of influence. Furthermore, the Caspian region was considered to be the most promising field for Turkey's foreign economic policy. Therefore, Turkish interests in the region must therefore be seen as a nexus of political, economic, and security interests (Kut 1994).

Turkish policy sought to stabilise the region, convinced that the power vacuum there constituted a threat to its security. In political terms, it was in search of opportunities to become engaged in efforts to restructure the region. As the first independent nation-state among the Turkic peoples, pan-turkic movements in Turkey saw it as its duty to foster the identity formation process in the Turkic countries, to help them consolidate their independence, and to support them in the process of their transformation into market economies. The US and Europe were also quick to characterise Turkey as a "model" for these new states; the aim was to use Turkey's active political and economic intermediary role to align these new countries with the West and to counter Russian and Iranian influence in the region (Oktav 2005). Accordingly, in forging closer ties with the new states, Ankara underlined the historical, cultural, ethnic, and religious roots that these countries shared with it (Karaosmanoğlu 1993). In economic terms, Turkey's main aim was to develop the region's energy potential,[23] and this entailed an early shift of the focus of Turkey's Caspian policy to the Caucasus region. In the Caucasus region itself, Turkey focused on cooperation with Azerbaijan on account of the cultural, linguistic, and historical affinities between the two nations (Aydın 2001).

Looking at the overall picture, we can break down Turkey's Caspian policy in the 1990s into two phases: an emotional phase (1991–95) characterised mainly by the desire to build a "Turkish world from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" and an economic-pragmatic phase (starting in the mid-1990s) that has been marked by a more down-to-earth approach. The offensive approach that Turkey initially pursued led, between 1993 and 1995, to a geopolitical rivalry with Russia, one that was reflected in particular in events in the Caucasus. Domestic tensions in Turkey were aggravated in the same period by fight-

22 The important milestones involved in efforts to develop the Mediterranean port city of Ceyhan into the "Rotterdam of the Middle East" (*Le Soir* 2005) included the inauguration of the Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan pipeline in 2005 and the Blue Steam pipeline in 2003.

23 The region's most important development potential must be seen in its energy reserves (IEA 2004; Freitag-Wirminghaus 2005; Ağacan 2006). However, one problem involved in exploiting these reserves is that the region is landlocked and therefore lacks access to the world's seas and markets. The producing countries are wholly reliant on transit through foreign territories, and this in turn renders them dependent on transit countries, Russia in particular. The routes would provide the transit countries with certain strategic control mechanisms. This dependence would affect the power constellations involved even if supply interruptions were not in fact used as an instrument but merely available as an option (Ege 2004). In the 1990s Moscow still held the transit monopoly since the available infrastructure was located on Russian territory. In other words, looked at in terms of market economy and national sovereignty, it made good sense to build a multiple pipeline with a view to making it more difficult to create monopoly structures as well as to promoting free competition (Olcay 2001).

ing in southeast Anatolia that tied down a good measure of Turkey's political and economic resources. This made it evident that Ankara lacked the capacities it would need to assume regional governance functions, and this in turn induced Turkey's foreign-policy elites, from 1995 on, to formulate a set of more realistic goals, and to do so in closer coordination with the US.[24]

These Turkish activities were initially welcomed by most of the newly independent countries in the Caspian region, which hoped that cooperation with Turkey would help them to break out of their isolation and build economic relations with Western institutions, allowing them to safeguard their national independence. However, there were divergent views on how far cooperation with Ankara should go. With Turkey displaying a marked tendency to adopt the attitude of the patron, the young countries involved were naturally disinclined to accept a situation only too familiar to them from decades of Soviet tutelage. It also turned out that Turkey had overestimated its economic potential and was in fact able to contribute little in the region in the sense of development impulses. Even though the economic balance of Turkey's economic engagement since the late 1990s was quite substantial, with over 2500 Turkish companies investing more than eight billion US dollars in the region (Önis 2001),[25] Turkey's overall economic balance remained less in comparison to Russia's. One of Turkey's weighty competitive disadvantages vis-à-vis Russia was its lack of direct infrastructure, since the existing transport network was geared to Russia, a circumstance that tended to keep the new nations in the region structurally dependent on Russia.

As early as the mid-1990s, Turkey's Caspian policy underwent an observable shift toward the Caucasus. Turkey accorded priority to its relations with Azerbaijan, which were initially clouded by the Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Ankara's uncompromising espousal of Baku's cause caused further strains in the relations, already tense, between Turkey and Armenia. The central lines of conflict between Turkey and Armenia must be seen in Armenia's call for a revision of the Turkish-Armenian border, a demand laid down in the preamble to the Armenian Constitution, and Yerevan's demand that Turkey recognise as a case of genocide the death, in 1915/16, of over one million Armenians in what was then the Ottoman Empire. An independent Georgia was the second priority of Turkey's Caucasus policy, with Turkey's tense relations to Armenia seeming to indicate that Georgia would be the best choice of a transit country for a transcaucasian pipeline to Turkey (Gumpel 2000).

It was at this point that Ankara's claim to a say in regional affairs came into sharp conflict with the Russian concept of the Near Abroad, which Moscow sought to use to revitalise its hegemony in the Caspian region (Arbatov 1993). The most tangible example of this geopolitical rivalry between Turkey and Russia was the competition between them for the

24 Turkish-US cooperation concentrated mainly on developing an East-West energy sector, with Turkey playing the key role and Russia and Iran effectively bypassed. The concept rested on two pillars: the oil pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan via Tiflis and the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey via Azerbaijan. Turkey expected to see its geostrategic weight boosted by the Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan pipeline, with abundant transit fees and – above all – Turkish control over energy flows between East and West serving to underline the country's important role in the region. The second pillar was the gas pipeline between Turkmenistan and Turkey, which was to be extended to Europe.

25 The sectors in which Turkey proved successful and managed to build a presence in the region included textiles, construction, telecommunications, and machine-building.

main export pipeline between the Caspian region and the world markets. Further conflicts of interest emerged in connection with Turkey's engagement in favour of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh conflict (which stood counter to Russia's support in favour of Armenia), its military cooperation with Georgia (in opposition to the presence of Russian troops in the break-away Georgian provinces of Abkhazia, Adjara, and South Ossetia), and the unofficial support Turkey provided to the Chechnian rebels (a move to which Russia responded by supporting the PKK). Ankara's (unofficial) engagement in the Caucasus conflicts can in large measure be traced back to pressure brought to bear on Turkish decision-makers by lobby groups from Chechnya, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, but also by a resurgent pan-Turkist current within Turkey's nationalist spectrum, which advocated approaches extending from close cooperation to an outright union with the Turkic countries.

Certain ambivalences became evident in Turkish-Russian relations as early as the end of the 1990s, and alongside their rivalries, the two countries had a common interests in cooperation in the fields of energy and trade. As early as 1996, a cooperative venture in the energy sector made Russia Turkey's primary gas supplier, and in terms of volume, Turkey's trade with Russia soon outstripped that posted with the Turkic countries. This example was thought to show that marked rivalry and good economic relations were wholly possible at one and the same time, and for this reason Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer has interpreted this bilateral relationship as "virtual rapprochement" (Bazoğlu Sezer 2000).

Finally, after 2001, Turkish-Russian relations took on a new quality, and the region, until then an arena for rivalries, became a new field for bilateral cooperation. In essence, there are three background reasons for this: a) the new constellations of power in the Caspian region that emerged in connection with the "fight against international terrorism" declared by Washington, which entailed a beefed-up US military presence in the region; b) an altered security perception on both sides due to the Iraq war; and c) the growing economic independencies between the two countries. The new aim of both countries was to develop a multi-dimensional strategic cooperation extending to energy, trade, and military relations (agreement signed in 2001). The point of departure was the increasingly close bilateral relations between the two countries in the 1990s in the energy sector, which have, since 2002, gradually been expanded to cover the political level as well.

The bilateral agenda included a cooperative venture in the field of energy that provided for major investments by Russian corporations in the Turkish energy sector, intelligence cooperation, and an expansion of bilateral trade relations. In 2005 Russia finally officially declared it willingness to end its support for the PKK (though without placing the PKK on Russia's official list of terrorist organisations). In return, Turkey pledged to hand over Chechnian rebels to Russia (Everts 2004).[26] This closer cooperation also found expression in the opening of the Bluestream pipeline in 2003. This direct pipeline between Russia and Turkey enabled Russia to strengthen its position as Turkey's main energy supplier, with Russia now accounting for over two thirds of Turkey's gas supply. In 2004 bilateral Russian-Turkish trade reached a volume of ten billion US dollars, a record level, and Russia was now Turkey's second most important trading partner, after the US.

26 As early as 1999, Prime Minister Ecevit had announced a ban on all activities of Turkish non-governmental organisations in support of the Chechnian rebels and measures to freeze their assets.

The new quality of Turkish-Russian relations entailed significant changes in Turkey's Armenia policy, with Turkey's relations with Armenia being decoupled from its relations with Azerbaijan and new initiatives being launched in the main fields of tension between the two countries, in particular as regards the question of a Turkish acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide. Officially, the Turkish side had traditionally rejected any discussion on the genocide issue, and the Turkish position can be said to have changed inasmuch as the Turkish government now saw leeway for possible discussions.[27] And as far as the Karabakh conflict was concerned, Ankara increasingly distanced itself from its previous support for Baku, seeking to assume the role of an honest broker,[28] and initiating various trilateral fora (*Milliyet* 30 June 2002), but also bilateral meetings, concerned chiefly with the issue of opening the Turkish-Armenian border (*Hürriyet* 10 Sept. 2003).

From 2004 on the new cooperative line of Turkey's Yerevan policy was given more profile: The government held that it would in principle be "possible and desirable" to open the Turkish-Armenian border if the Armenian side responded to Turkey's efforts to achieve peace (*Baku Sun* 26 April 2004) – a stance that came in for sharp criticism in Azerbaijan. However, substantial pressure from Baku, including threats to discontinue cooperation on energy, as well as domestic unrest in Turkey that buoyed up nationalist-pan-Turkic forces (Hermann 2005) have until today blocked any settlement of the issues under dispute. Still, there continue to be positive signs of a possible rapprochement between Ankara and Yerevan, including the continuation of bilateral meetings.

4 Conclusions

As noted above, the aim of the present paper was to look into: a) What shape the change in Turkey's regional foreign policy is taking on; b) what endogenous factors and actors may be cited to explain this process of change; c) how stable this process is; d) the extent to which this process of change offers Turkey the opportunity to assume the role of a driver of regional cooperation.

It was shown that Turkey's regional foreign policy is gradually changing from a unilateral, security-focused policy to one geared to cooperation and multilateral approaches. This change is reflected in a redefinition of the traditional notion of security in favour of an enlarged concept of security including economic, political and social dimensions. The ongoing erosion of the authoritarian state order dominant in Turkey has set the stage for a growing number of new civil society actors to enter the political process, lending diversity to the ongoing debates in Turkey on foreign and security policy. A growing tendency to

27 The Turkish government proposed that a multilateral commission of historians be convened to interpret the events in question on the basis of archival research, and it pledged to accept the commission's findings as binding (Ağacan 2006). In addition, an international, academic conference was held in Istanbul in 2006 to look into the Armenian genocide; while it was rejected by nationalist circles, it enjoyed the support of the government as well as a good number of liberal intellectuals (*Yeni Safak* 20 Sept. 2006). The conference was the first public function in Turkey at which all views of the events of 1915 were presented and discussed, including the question of whether or not there was in fact a genocide (Akyol 2005).

28 Turkey proposed a set of confidence-building measures under which Azerbaijan would ease the trade sanctions it had imposed against Armenia if Armenia withdrew from part of Karabakh (*Milliyet* 22 April 2005).

"economise" regional foreign policy has led to a more pragmatic, less ideologised regional foreign policy, making Turkey's engagement in the region more predictable. Accompanied by a growing internalisation of democratic norms and structures, this transformation process has met with strong support in society. However, it must be considered that the transformation process of Turkey's political order still needs time to consolidate the reforms which were carried out between 2001 und 2005.

A more democratic Turkey will in any case be more attractive, accepted, and influential in its neighbourhood than a Turkey in which the military and traditional state elite sees itself as "guardians" to "protect" democracy from its own population. Since threat perceptions of the decision-makers are being primarily shaped by domestic factors, Democratic pluralism at home and regional cooperative engagement are at once closely linked. But the complexity of the conflicts in the Middle East and Caspian region and the huge number of actors and interests involved set limits to Turkey's will and potential to engage as a stabilizing regional power. Though, Turkey's potential to assume the role of a stabilising factor in the region must be seen as an important asset that may serve at the same time to underpin Turkey's claim to a role as a regional power and to enable it to throw this weight into the balance in its accession negotiations with the EU. It must, though, be noted that it will take some time for Turkey's state elites to fully overcome its inward-looking stance.

Accordingly, Turkey's future role in the region will be defined on the one hand by the country's domestic givens and on the other by developments along its borders. And Turkey is faced here with two central challenges: consolidating its own stability by forging on with the reform process and stabilising its regional environment.

The most important challenge for Turkey on its way to provide a meaningful contribution to the region's stability and development is the need to consolidate its own political and economic stability. On the agenda are the need to consolidate the country's democratic reforms, to find a sustainable solution for the country's minority problems, and to undertake efforts to shore up the specifically Turkish synthesis of secularism and Muslim identity. Even though, as been shown above, the reforms in Turkey have not been conducted with an eye to Brussels, the credible accession perspective provided by the EU has served to accelerate the reform process. European politicians who see in Turkey a good opportunity to gain influence in the Middle East and the Caspian region will need to give due consideration to these framework conditions.

A further challenge must be seen in Turkey's unsettled neighbourhood. The future of the Middle East conflict, of Iraq, and the conflicts in the Caucasus and the Caspian region as a whole – these are issues that touch upon Turkey's national interests. The most important of them is the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, since a sustainable development of the region, including the stabilisation of Iraq, is virtually inconceivable without a durable settlement of the conflict. However, efforts to settle the regional conflicts call for close cooperation with the neighbouring countries, the EU and – in particular – with the US, the only peacekeeping power with the military and economic capacities as well political leverage needed to come up with a durable peace agreement in the Middle East. This must be seen as condition absolutely necessary to come to grips with the greatest challenge of the coming decades: the modernisation of this crisis region.

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